

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) In a tilt and telescopic position adjustable, impact absorbing type steering column apparatus for an automotive vehicle which comprises:

an ~~outer~~upper column;

~~an inner~~a lower column telescopically slidably fitted to said ~~outer~~upper column ~~so as to be~~ ~~telescopically slidable therein~~;

a fastening lock mechanism operable between a fastened state in which said fastening lock mechanism fastens fitting portions of said ~~outer~~upper column and said ~~inner~~lower column radially inwardly so that the steering column is fixed in an adjusted tilt and telescopic position and an unfastened state in which said ~~outer~~upper column and said ~~inner~~lower column are released so that said tilt and telescopic position is adjustable; and

an energy absorbing arrangement which absorbs an impact energy upon a secondary collision with movement of said ~~inner~~upper column towards a front side of the automotive vehicle,

an improvement characterized in that a low-friction material treatment is effected on one or both of slide surfaces of said fitting portions of said two columns so as to facilitate adjustment of the steering column.

2. (Previously Presented) An impact absorbing type steering column apparatus for an automotive vehicle according to claim 1, wherein said steering column apparatus is of a column assist electric power steering type.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) In a tilt and telescopic position adjustable, impact absorbing type steering column apparatus for an automotive vehicle which comprises:

an ~~outer~~upper column;

~~an inner~~ a lower column telescopically slidably fitted to said ~~outer~~ upper column so as to be telescopically slidable therein;

a fastening lock mechanism operable between a fastened state in which said fastening lock mechanism fastens fitting portions of said ~~outer~~ upper column and said ~~inner~~ lower column radially inwardly so that the steering column is fixed in an adjusted tilt and telescopic position and an unfastened state in which said ~~outer~~ upper column and said ~~inner~~ lower column are released so that said tilt and telescopic position is adjustable; and

an energy absorbing arrangement which absorbs an impact energy upon a secondary collision with movement of said ~~inner~~ upper column towards a front side of the automotive vehicle,

an improvement characterized in that a sleeve subjected to a low-friction material treatment is interposed between said fitting portions of said two columns so as to facilitate adjustment of the steering column.

5. (Previously Presented) An impact absorbing type steering column apparatus for an automotive vehicle according to claim 1, wherein the low-friction material treatment is one of baking of molybdenum disulfide, baking of fluororesin, baking of a mixture of molybdenum disulfide and fluororesin, coating of a ceramic, a metal soap treatment, a low-friction plating treatment and coating of a lubricating agent.

6. (Previously Presented) An impact absorbing type steering column apparatus for an automotive vehicle according to claim 2, wherein the low-friction material treatment is one of baking of molybdenum disulfide, baking of fluororesin, baking of a mixture of molybdenum disulfide and fluororesin, coating of a ceramic, a metal soap treatment, a low-friction plating treatment and coating of a lubricating agent.

7. (Previously Presented) An impact absorbing type steering column apparatus for an automotive vehicle according to claim 3, wherein the low-friction material treatment is one of baking of molybdenum disulfide, baking of fluororesin, baking of a mixture of molybdenum disulfide and fluororesin, coating of a ceramic, a metal

soap treatment, a low-friction plating treatment and coating of a lubricating agent.

8. (Previously Presented) An impact absorbing type steering column apparatus for an automotive vehicle according to claim 4, wherein the low-friction material treatment is one of baking of molybdenum disulfide, baking of fluororesin, baking of a mixture of molybdenum disulfide and fluororesin, coating of a ceramic, a metal soap treatment, a low-friction plating treatment and coating of a lubricating agent.